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# General Assembly

Fifty-fifth session

*Official Records*

**26**th plenary meeting
Thursday, 21 September 2000, 10 a.m.
New York

*President:* Mr. Holkeri ..... (Finland)

*The meeting was called to order at 10 a.m.*

**Agenda item 9** (*continued*)

**General debate**

**The President**: I call on His Excellency Mr. Abdalla Saleh Al-Ashtal, Chairman of the delegation of Yemen.

**Mr. Al-Ashtal** (Yemen) (*spoke in Arabic*): Permit me, at the outset, to extend to you, Mr. President, my congratulations on your election to the presidency of the fifty-fifth session of the General Assembly. Let me also pay a tribute to your predecessor, Mr. Theo-Ben Gurirab, who guided the work of the previous session of the General Assembly most successfully.

This session acquires special importance, not only because it is the first of the new millennium, but also because it coincides with the convening of the Millennium Summit, which gathered together, for the first time, a majority of the world's leaders. Therefore, the historic instruments that emerged from the Summit were a culmination of that momentous occasion.

The Republic of Yemen, as President Ali Abdullah Saleh emphasized in his statement at the Millennium Summit, is committed to achieving those ideals and objectives, supporting the leadership role of the United Nations and promoting the purposes of its Charter, with a view to upholding the principles of freedom, equality and justice, so that every society can assume its national responsibilities for comprehensive and sustainable development, including poverty eradication, the provision of food, shelter, health care and education, ensuring fundamental freedoms, human rights and democracy and enabling women to play their role in society.

Accordingly, the Republic of Yemen supports efforts by the Secretary-General to develop the role, mechanisms and organs of the international Organization to meet the challenges of twenty-first century. It also supports moves towards the renewal and development of inter-State relations and towards bringing them into line with new global phenomena that call for democracy, respect for human rights and the transformation of globalization into a positive force that will benefit all inhabitants of the world. In this connection, the Republic of Yemen reaffirms its invitation to host the Fifth International Conference of New or Restored Democracies, to be held in 2003.

Our world has become a single village where events interact globally with no room for isolationism. The merging of States' economies is the most prominent feature of mutual dependency and, consequently, of shared responsibility aimed at creating an environment at the national and global levels conducive to development and poverty eradication. Good governance, as stated in the United Nations Millennium Declaration, must exist not only within each country but at the international level and be based on laws and transparency in financial, monetary and trading systems.

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In our view, this requires that the developed industrialized countries fulfil their commitments to provide official development assistance to developing countries, address the special needs of the least developed countries, provide debt relief to poor countries and agree to cancel all official bilateral debts. Within this context we would also include the removal of all barriers against the exports of developing countries seeking access to world markets.

This year our people celebrated the tenth anniversary of the restoration of blessed Yemeni unity. The Republic of Yemen has been able to achieve successes in the democratic process, freedom, justice, respect for human rights and the enablement of women to play their role in society. While our people proceed to incorporate new concepts, with the aim of adapting to new world developments, they suffer from the financial burdens and the assumption of tasks inherent in comprehensive economic and social reform. In addition, the processes relating to economic liberalization — lifting subsidies on various foods and fuel and reducing public services, as prescribed by international financing institutions — have created social tensions. We therefore call upon the advanced industrialized countries to understand this underlying reality of shared responsibility in the context of comprehensive and sustainable development in the developing countries as a guarantee for international development, security and stability.

The Republic of Yemen has persevered in advocating attainment of peace and stability at the regional and the international levels by the surest ways, namely by resolving all disputes peacefully and through the use of mechanisms for the resolution of disputes, which embodies faith in the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations. We in the Republic of Yemen are proud to have placed practical reliance on those principles in resolving border issues with three neighbouring States: the Sultanate of Oman, Eritrea and, recently, the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia.

A new era of brotherhood, cooperation and mutual interests between the Republic of Yemen and the fraternal Kingdom of Saudi Arabia was inaugurated on 12 June 2000, following the signature of a treaty between the two countries on international territorial and maritime boundaries. We deem it an historic achievement by all criteria, since it ends a long period of tension and instability. The frontiers between the countries have become bridges of love, brotherhood and cooperation. This will, unquestionably, contribute to general stability in the region.

Within this framework one may understand Yemen's strong desire and long-term efforts to contribute to a resolution of the problems that have plagued Somalia. Now that the Arta conference has been held, the Transitional National Assembly has been constituted and the country's President has been elected, we support the implementation of the resolutions that emerged from the conference. We hope that the consensus between the representatives of the various Somali factions present at the conference will lead to stability and prepare the way for the commencement of a process of comprehensive and sustainable development in an atmosphere of national reconciliation. In this regard, we must commend the great efforts made by President Ismail Omar Guelleh of the Republic of Djibouti to ensure the success of the Arta conference.

The return to normalcy in Somalia will unquestionably promote security and stability in the Horn of Africa, which has suffered the scourge of war and its effects. That suffering can be seen in the cross-border flows of refugees. In the case of Yemen, hundreds of thousands of refugees from Somalia and other States of the region have infiltrated the country via our coasts. We appeal to the international community to extend assistance to resolve the problem of refugees and ensure their return to their homelands for the sake of stability and reconstruction in the region.

The Republic of Yemen believes that the peace that people seek is a peace based on justice, equality and respect for human rights. Accordingly, peace in the Middle East should be based primarily on the restoration of all the legitimate rights of the Palestinian people. Foremost among those rights is the establishment of an independent Palestinian State on Palestinian soil with Jerusalem as its capital. Israel must also withdraw from all occupied Arab territories in the Syrian Golan.

We would also like to convey our esteem and congratulations to fraternal Lebanon and its people on the unconditional liberation of its southern part.

The world is still amassing large quantities of weapons of mass destruction. Those weapons endanger international security and stability and hinder any steps

towards finding solutions to development problems. In accordance with relevant resolutions of the General Assembly, we in the Republic of Yemen stress the importance of making the Middle East region an area free from nuclear weapons and all weapons of mass destruction. We also endorse the international community's call to exert pressure on Israel to adhere to the Non-Proliferation Treaty and to place all its nuclear installations under international supervision.

Iraq is experiencing a human tragedy as a result of the embargo that has been imposed on it for 10 years. While calling for the implementation of United Nations resolutions concerning Iraq, we stress from this rostrum the need to end that tragic situation by lifting the embargo. It has lasted too long and has caused very extensive damage to the entire Iraqi population, especially women, children and elderly persons. In the same vein, we call for a complete lifting of the embargoes imposed on the Sudan and Libya.

With regard to the dispute over the three Arabian Gulf islands belonging to the United Arab Emirates, Yemen hopes that an amicable and peaceful solution to that issue will be decided along the lines followed by the Republic of Yemen in the resolution of its border disputes with its neighbours.

Lastly, we welcome all the resolutions calling for the reform of the United Nations and its structure so as to make it more transparent and democratic, including resolutions concerning the expansion of the membership of the Security Council and enhancing and strengthening the role of the General Assembly in the maintenance of international peace and security.

It is our hope that resolutions will be adopted at this important session to contribute to the reform and restructuring of the United Nations and its organs in order that it may meet the requirements of the new century, with its increasing problems and ever more complex inter-State relations.

It is our responsibility to make this session an occasion to review our work and to examine the resolutions adopted by our leaders at the Millennium Summit so that we can transform them into tangible reality. Doing so will further our progress towards achieving security, stability, development and prosperity for our countries and peoples. I am confident that our united stance and sincere endeavours will guarantee the success of this session and the achievement of the desired results.

**The President**: I now give the floor to the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Mongolia, His Excellency Mr. Luvsangiin Erdenechuluun.

**Mr. Erdenechuluun** (Mongolia): Allow me at the outset to join previous speakers in congratulating you, Sir, on your election as President of the Millennium Assembly of the United Nations. Allow me also to express my confidence that under your skilful stewardship this session of the General Assembly will successfully accomplish its mandate. I also wish to commend our outgoing President, Mr. Theo-Ben Gurirab, for his eminent leadership during the previous session of the Assembly.

My delegation extends its warm welcome to the Government and the people of Tuvalu, whose membership has brought the United Nations yet another step closer to universality.

This session of the General Assembly is entrusted with the honourable mission of following up on what was agreed by the Millennium Summit of world leaders. For me personally, this session is also very special. For 26 years, or most of my diplomatic career, I have been associated with the United Nations. I feel particularly privileged to deliver as Foreign Minister a policy statement of my Government from this rostrum.

A few days ago, Member States reaffirmed at the highest level their commitment to the purposes and principles of the United Nations Charter, their unequivocal support for a more efficient and reinvigorated United Nations and their firm resolve to collectively work towards a healthier and cleaner world, free from fear and free from want. The Millennium Declaration underscored the collective responsibility of world leaders to uphold the principles of human dignity, equality and equity at the global level.

That sense of solidarity and shared responsibility is, in our view, crucial for the international community to be able to address effectively the formidable challenges at the dawn of the new millennium. The challenges the world faces today are indeed manifold and complex, both in scope and nature. The central challenge, as identified in the Secretary-General's millennium report, is how to make globalization more inclusive and have its benefits equitably enjoyed by all nations.

As recently as the mid-1980s, the notion of globality was virtually unknown in the international vocabulary, let alone the concepts of global governance or global climate change. Yet just a little more than a decade later, not only does the idea of globality blend with our day-to-day life, globalization per se has turned into a powerful and inevitable process. Globalization has been generously showered lately with both praise and criticism. Along with greater opportunities, it can also lead to situations of heightened insecurity, especially for the weak and poor nations. As my President, Natsagiyn Bagabandi, noted in his Millennium address,

> "Mongolia believes that, with its impartiality and universal legitimacy, as well as its Charter-based prevalence over any other international agreement, the United Nations is uniquely placed to provide an overarching general guidance to the process of globalization ... so that it incorporates the human dimension in its seemingly unruly trends". (*A/55/PV.4*)

As we draw lessons from the 1997-1998 Asian financial crisis, it has become more evident that the process of globalization ought to be managed so as to make the best of its opportunities and diminish its negative effects; and that internal policies, no matter how righteous, are not sufficient to ensure sustained economic growth in this era of growing interdependence. This is even more true for developing, structurally disadvantaged countries. In a globally liberalized trade and financial system, these countries need to be assisted to withstand powerful external forces, which so often are utterly destructive. Again, this necessitates a genuine display of solidarity and shared responsibility on the part of the international community.

The global fight against abject poverty, inequality and disparity, violence, HIV/AIDS, organized crime and other acute problems is being impeded by, inter alia, the increasing external debt burden, the decline in official development assistance and the growing digital and development divides between haves and have-nots. The affluent countries could exhibit their solidarity and shared responsibility by further opening their markets, providing deeper and faster debt relief, and giving more and better-focused development assistance and incentives for foreign direct investment flows to their less fortunate partners. In this context, Mongolia looks to the upcoming high-level international conference on financing for development, the Third United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries, and the new multilateral trade negotiations to produce specific, time-bound commitments.

Mongolia welcomes the South Summit Declaration and the Havana Programme of Action as well as the outcome of the meeting between the G-77 and the G-8 in Okinawa as important junctures providing an inspiring vision for more action-oriented South-South cooperation and a meaningful North-South partnership.

My delegation attaches great importance to the decisions adopted at the tenth session of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), which underscored the necessity of creating a legal environment that would facilitate transit traffic for landlocked developing countries, improve transit infrastructure and increase efficiency of trade by eliminating transport and bureaucratic bottlenecks. Here, I am pleased to announce that a first specific step to enhance and facilitate multilateral transit transport cooperation is being taken in the North-East Asian region. As a result of a tripartite meeting held in Ulan Bator under the auspices of UNCTAD earlier this year, Mongolia, Russia and China have agreed to conclude a transit traffic framework agreement. Negotiations to draft such an agreement are under way.

My delegation further believes that the upcoming fifth meeting of governmental experts from landlocked and transit developing countries and representatives of donor countries and financial development institutions, as well as a ministerial meeting on transit transport issues, expected to be held in 2003, will play a critical role in strengthening a common framework of action to ease the burden faced by landlocked developing countries.

We support the proposals put forward in the millennium report by the Secretary-General on improving the provision of health services and communications in areas stricken by natural disasters. As some might be aware, heavy snowstorms and the extremely cold winter of 1999-2000 in Mongolia caused the loss of nearly 3 million heads of livestock, or about 10 per cent of the nation's entire livestock population. Besides the direct loss of livestock, these heavy winter conditions, known as *dzud*, had other gravely devastating economic and social consequences,

including the loss of precious human lives. I would like to take this opportunity to express, on behalf of my Government and the people of Mongolia, our sincere gratitude to those Governments, international organizations and individuals that rendered timely assistance and support in our efforts to overcome the consequences of *dzud*.

As world leaders solemnly reaffirmed in their Millennium Declaration,

> "the United Nations is the indispensable common house of the entire human family, through which we will seek to realize our universal aspirations for peace, cooperation and development."(*A/RES/55/2, para. 32*)

If the United Nations is to adequately respond to the challenges of today's increasingly interdependent and rapidly changing world, a great deal will depend on its ability to adapt itself to an environment that is markedly different from the one in which it was conceived by its founders 55 years ago.

The demands on the Organization have increased many times over, especially in the area of peacekeeping. The lessons of Srebrenica, Rwanda and Sierra Leone have made it abundantly clear that a thorough and critical review is needed to make peacekeeping operations succeed in meeting our commitment under the Charter. We are deeply indebted to the United Nations Panel on Peace Operations, chaired by Ambassador Brahimi, which, in its report, presented a frank analysis of the prevailing situation and forthright recommendations for change. The report deserves serious consideration and specific action at this session of the General Assembly.

Mongolia stands committed to making a practical contribution to United Nations peacekeeping operations. As part of its efforts to adequately equip its military officers and units for participation therein, Mongolia took part for the first time in recent training exercises held in Kazakhstan for Central Asian countries.

Efforts to reform the Security Council have not yet brought us closer to resolving some of the fundamental issues on the agenda of the Open-ended Working Group on that question. Like many others, we continue to believe that the expansion of the Security Council should take place made in both categories, permanent and non-permanent. In the former category, along with major industrialized Powers such as Japan and Germany, developing countries from Asia, Africa and Latin America that are able to contribute to the maintenance of international peace and security should occupy their rightful place in the Council. A reasonable increase in the number of non-permanent seats would reflect the representative character of the Council and enable a growing number of Member States to contribute to its work. An essential part of the reform process should deal with the veto power, the use of which should be considerably curtailed.

Mongolias vision of the future of the United Nations has been elaborated in the memorandum of its Government on enhancing the role of the United Nations in promoting the security interests of small States, circulated in the United Nations as document A/55/310.

North-East Asia is a region where the interests of the big and powerful intersect, where the leftovers of the cold-war era are still discernible, and where territorial disputes await a positive solution. Nonetheless, groundbreaking developments are taking place which give rise to optimism and hope. I have in mind the historic inter-Korean summit, which has played a crucial role for building trust and confidence between the two countries. This and other recent developments may well have a positive impact on the situation in North-East Asia as a whole.

Due to its historical and geopolitical realities, North-East Asia is probably the only subregion that lacks a mechanism at the governmental level where security issues of concern can be discussed collectively. Various ideas and proposals to this effect have been floating around for some time, but no serious discussion of this issue has taken place so far at the track one level. The time may have come to start thinking about the possibility of engaging in a dialogue, starting with a free exchange of views on the framework of these discussions.

As we review the progress made in the area of arms limitation, disarmament and non-proliferation, our reaction can at best be termed as mixed. While there has been some movement forward in certain areas, there has been little or no progress in others.

The 2000 Review Conference of the States Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) included in its Final Document a number of agreed conclusions and

recommendations related to nuclear disarmament. For the first time ever, with reference to article VI, all the nuclear-weapon States made

> "an unequivocal undertaking to accomplish the total elimination of their nuclear arsenals, leading to total nuclear disarmament to which all States parties are committed under article VI". (*NPT/CONF.2000/28, part I, p. 14, para. 15 (6)*)

The Conference also agreed on the need to establish in the Conference on Disarmament an appropriate subsidiary body with a mandate to deal with nuclear disarmament. It called for the immediate establishment of such a body. The Conference also called for further efforts by the nuclear-weapon States to reduce their nuclear arsenals unilaterally and for further reductions of non-strategic nuclear weapons, based on unilateral initiatives as an integral part of the nuclear disarmament process. A call has been made for the engagement, as soon as appropriate, of all the nuclear-weapon States in a process leading to the total elimination of their nuclear arsenal. These elements constitute an important statement of purpose and, if translated into practice, will open the way to practical nuclear disarmament measures.

Mongolia welcomes the ratification by the Russian Federation of the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty (CTBT) and START II treaties, and we look forward to the United States' ratification of the CTBT at an early date. We urge the Russian Federation and the United States to follow up on their earlier announcement regarding the discussions on the START III Treaty.

Mongolia joins the international appeal to the key States to ratify the Comprehensive Nuclear Test Ban Treaty so that it could be brought into force as soon as possible. The urgency of this call becomes even more compelling in light of the activities that could seriously undermine the nuclear non-proliferation regime.

My delegation also believes that it is important for the Conference on Disarmament, which for several years has been unable to agree on a programme of work, to end its stalemate and to engage in earnest negotiations on an early conclusion of a universal and verifiable fissile materials cut-off treaty. Pending the negotiation of that treaty, we would welcome a moratorium by the nuclear-weapon-States on the production of weapons-grade fissile materials and for greater transparency through disclosure of their present stocks. Better still, we would urge the United Nations to establish a register for all stocks of weapons-grade fissile material. This would help establish an important balance with the United Nations Register of Conventional Arms.

We welcome the decision taken by the United States to postpone the deployment of a national missile defence system. The undermining of the Anti-Ballistic Missile (ABM) Treaty, a cornerstone of strategic stability, could trigger an uncontrollable nuclear arms race.

The growing emphasis placed of late on nuclear weapons in military doctrines is a cause of increasing concern. It is, therefore, only natural that countries like Mongolia favour the adoption of such steps as de-alerting of nuclear weapons, removal of nuclear warheads from delivery vehicles and joint undertakings by the nuclear-weapon powers of a pledge not to be the first to use nuclear weapons. These are essential safety measures that would reduce the risk of unauthorized or miscalculated use of nuclear weapons. In addition, provision should be made for legally binding negative security assurances to non-nuclear States Parties to the NPT, as has become customary for nuclear-weapon States in signing Protocols to nuclear-weapon-free zone treaties. In this context, Mongolia welcomes the Secretary-General's proposal to convene a major international conference aimed at identifying ways of eliminating nuclear dangers. We hope that this timely proposal will be given serious consideration at this session of the General Assembly, followed by the adoption of a relevant resolution to this effect.

Mongolia shares the legitimate concern of the world community over the global proliferation of small arms and light weapons, which are the principal instruments of death wherever conflicts and wars occur. We hope that the United Nations Conference on the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects, scheduled for 2001, will result in practical measures designed to tighten control, curb the spread and destroy surplus weapons.

As is known, in 1992 Mongolia declared its territory a nuclear-weapon-free zone; this was widely supported by the international community. Since then we have come a long way. At its fifty-third session the General Assembly adopted resolution 53/77 D entitled "Mongolia's international security and nuclear-weapon-free status". As a follow-up to its declaration,

the Mongolian Parliament adopted a law last February on Mongolia's nuclear-weapon-free status, thus institutionalizing it at the national level. At this session, we expect a joint statement by the nuclear-weapon States to provide security assurances to Mongolia in connection with its nuclear-weapon-free status, which would represent an important step along the road to institutionalizing that status at the international level. I wish to put on record my Government's appreciation to the five Permanent Members for their constructive cooperation and support.

We believe that the aforementioned security assurances would be more credible if Mongolia's other external security issues were duly addressed. In that case, not only would the status be more credible; but it would also allow Mongolia to serve as a positive factor of stability and predictability in the region. In this connection, we certainly share the view of the Secretary-General, expressed in his report on this item, that consultations with the relevant United Nations bodies will produce concrete and action-oriented approaches to addressing the non-nuclear aspects of security.

In line with the broader approach to security, and on the basis of relevant provisions of the aforementioned resolution, the International Conference on Human Security in a Globalized World, in the context of Mongolia, was held this year with the participation of the United Nations and international experts; it produced detailed recommendations on a wide range of human security-related areas. In many respects, the recommendations of our Conference parallel the spirit and concepts of the Millennium Declaration.

In July of this year parliamentary elections were held in Mongolia, the fourth elections since the onset of democratic reforms a decade ago. The elections were recognized as free and fair by all political forces, as well as by international observers, and served as a testimony of further consolidation of democratic norms and institutions in my country. They proved once again that the embrace of democracy and respect for human rights are an irreversible choice made by the Mongolian people. As a result of the elections, the Mongolian People's Revolutionary Party won an overwhelming majority of seats in the Parliament. From this high rostrum, I wish to reiterate my Government's robust commitment to the consolidation of democracy and the continuity of reforms. The task of ensuring human security and promoting human-centred development is high on the agenda of the new Government, as envisaged in its action programme. The Government is resolved to ensure sustained economic growth through reinvigorating and encouraging the development of domestic industry, upgrading the living standards of the people by reducing poverty and unemployment and ensuring equitable social and educational opportunities.

The Government of Mongolia will intensify the structural reforms and encourage an export-oriented, private sector-led economy. Mining, the processing of raw materials of animal origin, tourism and other export-oriented sectors are the priority areas of development. The privatization of State assets, including the most valued State enterprises, will continue. The creation of a favourable environment for the attraction of foreign investment is also a priority objective.

I fully share the view expressed in the Millennium Report that success depends to a considerable degree on the quality of governance the country enjoys. Hence, my Government attaches particular importance to enhancing the effectiveness, transparency and accountability of public offices and fighting corruption in both corporate and public areas. The Government of Mongolia is determined to cooperate closely with non-governmental organizations and other representatives of civil society in enhancing the rule of law throughout the country.

In its endeavours to carry out simultaneous economic and political reforms, Mongolia is encountering a multitude of challenges. The eighth meeting of the Mongolia Assistance Group will be held later this year in Paris, and my Government is confident that our foreign partners will continue to extend their generous support and cooperation so as to ease the transition challenges faced by my country.

In pursuing its foreign policy, based on the continuity of a multi-pillar, open and proactive approach, Mongolia will continue to develop and expand its friendly relations with the Russian Federation and the People's Republic of China on the principles of good-neighbourliness, mutual benefit and equality. My Government will accord high importance to the further development of bilateral relations with the industrialized nations, including the United States

of America, Japan, other Asian and Pacific countries and members of the European Union. Their political, moral and financial support will continue to play an important role in facilitating our reform efforts. The Mongolian Government will actively strive to strengthen our traditional long-standing relations with Eastern and Central European countries, as well as with the developing countries of Asia and the Pacific, Latin America and Africa.

Mongolia will continue its active participation in multilateral processes and international organizations, such as the United Nations, and will spare no effort to ensure that the world Organization remains a focal point for the coordination of the efforts of the community of nations towards peace and development in the years to come.

**The President**: I now give the floor to His Excellency Mr. Souef Mohamed El-Amine, Minister for Foreign Affairs and Cooperation of the Comoros.

**Mr. El-Amine** (Comoros) (*spoke in Arabic*): On behalf of the Islamic Federal Republic of the Comoros, I congratulate you, Sir, on your assumption of the presidency of the General Assembly at its fifty-fifth session. I assure you of our full support and cooperation in the accomplishment of your tasks. Your skill and extensive experience in international affairs convince us that this session will be crowned with success.

I am honoured to take this opportunity to extend our profound appreciation to your predecessor, Mr. Theo-Ben Gurirab, the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Namibia, for his outstanding management of our affairs during the previous session, for his leadership role in the General Assembly and for his spirit of effective cooperation.

We also thank Secretary-General Kofi Annan for his tireless efforts in the service of our Organization. His wise approach to the important issues and the reforms he is implementing in the United Nations deserve our support and cooperation at all levels.

On behalf of the Islamic Federal Republic of the Comoros, I also congratulate Tuvalu on its admission to membership of the United Nations.

(*spoke in French*)

Considering the enormous responsibilities of the United Nations in peacekeeping, the defence of human rights and the promotion of social well-being, it is easy to see why, 55 years after its creation, the Organization still has a great deal to do. Given its varied activities, it needs more solid and up-to-date structures that are adapted to contemporary conditions; sufficient and reliable funding; sound, transparent and energetic management; and the ability to carry out its tasks in conformity with current priorities and specific regional concerns. The Millennium Summit further reaffirmed our Organization's essential role in this respect.

That is why the United Nations new organizational plan must allow it to respond to the needs of today's world in the face of major upheavals that inspire intense introspection and consideration. Its reform is also necessary to guarantee sound and reliable structures, with equitably distributed duties, that will confirm its universal nature and ensure better results. Thus, it is particularly necessary to open the Security Council, the organ primarily responsible for the maintenance of international peace and security, to other countries, as permanent and non-permanent members, in order to make it more representative and to ensure that its membership and working methods reflect present-day realities.

At a time when the world is evolving and undergoing globalization, the island States and small, poor countries with limited resources are preoccupied by the threat of marginalization looming over them. In addition to the various crises besetting our countries, this state of affairs calls on us to address the urgent need for support, assistance and, especially, awareness of the dangers we are facing.

First are the dangers arising from the immediate and long-term repercussions of the conflicts engulfing the planet, claiming millions of victims, most of them children, women and the elderly.

Secondly, there are the dangers posed to the world by the ever-growing number of acts of terrorism. In this respect, it is important not only to be aware of the potential danger and to find effective means of countering it, but also to draw clear distinctions between and not to confuse the behaviour of people who act in contempt of law and human dignity with that of those who act primarily out of religious considerations.

Thirdly, there are the dangers resulting from flagrant violations of human rights. To combat this problem, the Islamic Federal Republic of the Comoros

gives its full support to the implementation of the International Criminal Court, which should put an end to these abuses. The Republic is preparing to ratify the Statute soon, and it hopes that the implementation of the Court's jurisdiction will be effective.

Fourthly, there are the dangers resulting from natural catastrophes and from the overall degradation of the environment — the increasing vulnerability of which is a source of serious concern for the world. The small land-locked States — developing countries of limited size — are particularly exposed to these dangers. Given the increasing severity of this problem, there is an increasingly urgent need to give priority to protecting ecological systems.

Fifthly, there are the dangers posed by serious diseases from which our populations are suffering — diseases such as AIDS, malaria and many others, extreme poverty included.

Sixthly, there are the dangers posed by the marginalization of the poor countries in the midst of a world undergoing rapid change, a world in which it is hard for these countries to find their way.

Seventhly and finally, there are the dangers to which these same countries are exposed as a result of the external debt burden which absorbs a great deal of their attention and wreaks havoc on their national budgets.

This is to say that in this first stage of our entry into the third millennium, there are many outstanding questions regarding the future of humanity, and these questions require careful consideration. The overall image presented by the world today is a sombre one.

Also, as regards economic issues, it goes without saying that the world is facing a situation that calls for serious examination and for joint action by the development partners to support national, subregional and regional efforts.

In the case of Africa, its overall economic problems are a source of concern because they have become aggravated as a result of the increasingly globalizing world and the great strain that external debt is placing on our economies. Further, it makes sense to be concerned about the future of a continent that has been marginalized, in particular as regards global trade and the information revolution, and afflicted by all kinds of plagues. It is essential that — in addition to the efforts of the individual countries and in the framework of regional integration — the continent benefit from the good offices of the international financial institutions in examining and addressing different problem areas. In this regard, I am pleased to here reiterate our appreciation for the efforts of the United Nations Development Programme to fight, alongside our Governments, all forms of underdevelopment.

As a small landlocked developing country and as an African country, the Islamic Federal Republic of the Comoros is grappling with these kinds of problems. It cannot be denied that, despite our current situation, our Government is manifesting a firm will in searching for ways and means of lifting the country out of the hole in which it finds itself and of creating favourable conditions for improving the life of our society. The effort under way to clean up the public finances and to revive and restructure the national economy attest to the Comorian Government's determination to improve the socio-economic situation that has prevailed for many years in the Islamic Federal Republic of the Comoros.

Our bilateral and multilateral partners have consistently supported these efforts; however, I need to reiterate the necessity of enhancing this assistance in order to help us meet the challenge of underdevelopment and, above all, to help us avoid falling victim to the perverse effects of globalization.

We should also focus on the political situation of the world, which is today divided by various sorts of wars and crises, which are seriously upsetting the peace and security of peoples. Greater attention should be given to these two crucial objectives — objectives that form the very basis of our Organization — and greater thought should be given to how to vouchsafe them.

This is why, on the subject of wars, I would like to appeal to the goodwill of the parties involved in the problem of the Democratic Republic of the Congo and in the entire Great Lakes region and to ask them to focus their efforts on démarches that can produce negotiated solutions to the disputes of these parties.

As regards Somalia, my country is greatly pleased by the current happy outcome of the situation there and by the establishment of a transition Government. The Islamic Federal Republic of the Comoros hopes that the solid foundations have now

been established so that a lasting peace can be secured for this fraternal country.

In the same vein, the Comorian Government appreciates the efforts made in the holding of the Camp David negotiations and salutes the work of the Government of the United States of America in this regard. The Comorian Government, which has supported and continues to support the Palestinian cause, hopes that these efforts will lead to a speedy resolution of the Middle East crisis — a resolution that will be in the interest of the peoples of that region who have so long suffered from incessant instability. The Comorian Government also believes that any solution to this crisis must include the establishment of an independent Palestinian State, with Al-Quds al-Sharif as its capital.

Further, we proclaim the necessity of completely lifting the embargo against Libya, and also ask that the embargo against Iraq be lifted. We appeal to the Iraqi Government to cooperate more fully with the efforts to free the Kuwaiti prisoners.

Conflict zones remain in all the continents. The Charter of the United Nations having been written for the peoples, the United Nations must enhance its efforts to prevent and resolve conflicts by peaceful means. In essence this means insisting on the urgent necessity of supporting the cause of world peace, because its absence handicaps all efforts to achieve real sustainable human development.

In this regard, allow me to review the current situation in my country, the Islamic Federal Republic of the Comoros, and to explain how disturbed the people are about the threat to peace posed by the separatist crisis that has been taking place on the sisterly island of Anjouan for close to three years. With the support of the international community — in particular, the Organization of African Unity (OAU), the League of Arab States, the European Union, and International Organization of la Francophonie, and the Organization of the Islamic Conference — the Islamic Federal Republic of the Comoros has explored every means of putting an end to this crisis. The intransigence of the Anjouanese party after the declarations that were made during the inter-island conferences that were held at Addis Ababa and at Antananarivo have led the OAU to take repressive measures against this party — measures that were to be applied in a step-by-step fashion.

The object of imposing the economic embargo against the sisterly island of Anjouan was to lead the Anjouanese to be reasonable. However, the situation has hardly changed, and during this time the lowest levels of Anjouanese society — along with all those who were supporting national unity — suffered terribly from the effects of these measures. Recognizing on the one hand that, given the hardening of the movement's position, this situation was victimizing the population of Anjouan, and particularly the poorest levels, and convinced on the other hand that we Comorians together might be able to come up with a non-military solution, the current leadership of the country, under the enlightened direction of Colonel Azali Assoumani, President of the Islamic Federal Republic of the Comoros, has insisted on undertaking direct discussions with the Anjouanese party, in the hopes of arriving at national reconciliation.

The attempts at initiating such a dialogue opened the way to the signing of an initial text on 1 July 1999 at Fomboni on the island of Mwali. This text is considered to represent a significant step on the part of the current regime — a step towards harmonizing the opposing points of view.

The negotiations were continued recently, leading to the signing of a joint declaration, again in Fomboni on 26 August. This provides another appropriate framework for preserving the unity and territorial integrity of the Comoros, to which the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs of The Gambia referred on 20 September. Because it allows dialogue to be initiated with our Anjouan brothers on the future Comorian entity, the declaration is of particular significance to Comorians.

The Fomboni declaration makes it clear that the new Commorian entity is the sole subject of international law within the Comorian frontiers recognized by the international community. In order to push ahead with this process, a timetable was established spelling out the various stages leading to the submission to a referendum of the act which is to govern the future Comorian entity.

I should like to make it clear that the Fomboni joint declaration takes account of, and respects, the spirit of the Antananarivo Agreement, which was rejected by the Anjouan party.

Today, more than ever, there is hope that it will be possible to resolve this unfortunate problem by

peaceful means and to lay the groundwork for a democratic State — a Comorian-style democracy, a democracy stemming from the living forces of the nation of the Comoros, without any outside interference or influence. Would it have been just to reject this breakthrough, thus penalizing innocent women and children who have been so sorely tried by the embargo, and then to envisage a military solution? If there had been resort to war in order to have peace, why not avoid it, if possible, and so prevent casualties? The Islamic Federal Republic of the Comoros has committed itself to dialogue to settle conflicts, respecting the principles of our Organization.

This wise principle was the basis of the Comorian authorities' approach to their brothers in Anjouan. I therefore appeal for understanding by all our partners who have always supported our efforts to find a negotiated lasting solution to this crisis. This is why, while respecting the position of the Organization of African Unity (OAU) and that of all our other partners, I reiterate, on behalf of the Government of the Comoros, our determination to continue this struggle, together with them, in order to preserve the unity and territorial integrity of our country.

The Government of the Comoros pays tribute to the Secretary-General of the OAU, Mr. Salim Ahmed Salim, for his personal efforts and his efforts through the OAU to resolve this crisis. We also express our wholehearted gratitude to the League of Arab States, as well as the Organization of the Islamic Conference, the International Organization of la Francophonie, the countries of the region and other friendly countries, including France, for their support.

We earnestly hope that reason has finally prevailed with our brothers in Anjouan and that they have really understood that breaking up the covenant of unity and fraternity which links us and will always link us — Comorians of the four islands of our archipelago State — will not benefit anyone.

We hope that we have all learned the lessons from events which have so seriously affected the country in human, material, psychological and other terms, and that we understand that war will always be a bad master and the worst choice. The process of reconciliation is a demanding task requiring a great deal of resources. In this connection, we make a pressing appeal to the international community to support the programme of reconstruction and national reconciliation which the Comorian Government has drawn up in conjunction with the World Bank.

Faithful to the fundamental principles of the Charter, the Government of the Comoros continues to opt for the policy of dialogue and discussion to resolve all of the problems which confront us. With profound respect for these principles, we appeal to France, with which the Comoros has for long had close ties of friendship and cooperation, to contemplate a direct and constructive dialogue which will make it possible quickly to reach a negotiated solution with regard to reintegrating the Comorian island of Mayotte into its natural community.

As stability, understanding, unity, harmony among our peoples, partnership and progress go hand in hand, creating conditions to guarantee these values would be the best gift which the international community can offer present and future generations on the eve of the next millennium.

(*spoke in Arabic*)

> "If people one day want life
> Fate has no choice but to respond;
> Night has no choice but to yield to dawn
> And shackles cannot but be shattered."

**The President:** I now call on His Excellency Mr. Irakli Menagarishvili, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Georgia.

**Mr. Menagarishvili** (Georgia): At the outset, allow me to extend my warmest congratulations to you, Sir, on your election as President of the General Assembly at its fifty-fifth session. It is without doubt a fitting recognition of your rich personal experience as well as Finland's role in world affairs.

The Millennium Summit has made it clear that, in the words of the Secretary-General,

> "the United Nations remains as much in demand as in need of change." (*Global Governance 4 (1998), p. 123*)

This is a formidable challenge, but also an opportunity, and the cost of not rising to the new calls of the next millennium can be dangerous.

I cannot but recall that many ideas on globalization and governance generated and debated at the current session echo the concept of "management of interdependencies", put forward by our President,

Mr. Eduard Shevardnadze, at the forty-seventh session in 1992. With this in mind, let me address some of those important issues from our standpoint.

The end of totalitarian regimes set in motion a whole host of progressive changes within and among countries. However, we are still struggling with the adverse legacies of totalitarianism. The experience of the post-cold-war era clearly demonstrates that intra-State conflicts have become a major threat to international peace and security. The Secretary-General's report to the Millennium Summit called for reshaping of the United Nations approach to peacekeeping to meet the challenges of this new global threat. This very idea is particularly topical for the region I represent. As my colleague, the Foreign Minister of Germany, said: "the triangle between Central Asia, the Caucasus and the Middle East" being "full of destabilizing factors ... is threatening to become the crisis region of the century ahead." (*A/55/PV.14*) Therefore, this region merits closer attention by the international community.

In this context, I also endorse the appeal by the Austrian Foreign Minister, in her capacity as Chairperson-in-Office of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), for enhanced political awareness by the world community of these unresolved or potential conflicts and security risks, which she said

> "are often outside the spotlight of broader public attention, but nevertheless have a highly destabilizing impact on the region and beyond."(*A/55/PV.17*)

Periodic failures of United Nations peace efforts, manifested, for instance, in the "ethnic cleansing" of the predominantly Georgian population during the tragic developments in Abkhazia, Georgia, highlighted all the flaws of selective peacekeeping. Well-intentioned United Nations efforts have sometimes been delayed and ineffective in conflicts which the world community regards as peripheral. I believe that we should make every effort to prevent conflicts becoming "frozen".

Consequently, we support the Secretary-General's proposal aimed at implementing necessary changes to increase the effectiveness of United Nations peace efforts in general. I cannot help but call for the more frequent and firm application of the United Nations peace-enforcement mechanisms envisioned in Chapter VII of the Charter, in particular those for coping with protracted conflicts.

The Charter calls for the consent of the parties involved when launching peacekeeping operations or renewing their mandate. However, peacekeeping practices often play into the hands of separatists trying to maintain the status quo. We believe that the United Nations should intensify its efforts to balance the interests of all sides with the dynamics of the peace process and the comprehensive resolution of conflicts. Moreover, we welcome the further enhancement of the United Nations standby arrangement system and the improvement of the Organization's rapid-deployment capabilities.

Georgia also expresses its agreement with the United States initiative to reconsider the scale of assessments and the reallocation of the cost of United Nations peacekeeping. In the context of increasing the effectiveness of United Nations peace operations, this initiative is of great significance.

In addition, complex conflicts, such as that in Abkhazia, Georgia, which has left hundreds of thousands of internally displaced persons deprived of the right to return to their permanent places of residence, must be addressed within a multifaceted framework, which entails social and economic approaches, along with political ones.

We are grateful to the United Nations for the invaluable assistance it provides to the refugees and internally displaced persons in Georgia. I also express our special appreciation for the United Nations Development Programme assistance programmes in Georgia, particularly those aimed at improving the living conditions of the internally displaced persons and increasing their self-reliance.

I am stressing the issue of peacekeeping as it is directly related to the most sensitive problem for my country in the past seven years, since it fell victim to aggressive separatism in Abkhazia, Georgia. I reiterate that a peaceful resolution of this conflict is the only acceptable option for the Georgian Government. In this respect, I extend our gratitude to the United Nations and to the Group of Friends of the Secretary-General for their efforts in support of the peace process. But we should also admit that so far we have failed to achieve any tangible results here.

Recently, within the United Nations framework and in accordance with the relevant Security Council resolution, a document on the distribution of constitutional competences between Tbilisi and Sokhumi has been drafted. We support this initiative and find it difficult to understand what stands in the way of its timely endorsement. We are convinced that submission of the document for consideration by the Security Council should not be delayed; its endorsement by the Security Council as a basis for political negotiations will create a sound ground for advancing the peace process in Abkhazia, Georgia.

Furthermore, I reiterate that about 300,000 predominantly Georgian refugees and internally displaced persons from that conflict zone are still being subjected to the continuous violation of their rights and difficult living conditions. The return of the internally displaced persons to their rightful places of residence is continuously hampered by the Abkhaz side, with blatant disregard for internationally recognized norms, as well as for a number of Security Council resolutions. We strongly believe that there is an urgent need for the Security Council to address those issues in a timely manner.

It has become apparent that at times the United Nations is not capable of handling conflicts on its own. I strongly believe that the key to more effective United Nations peace policies in our region lies in closer collaboration and synchronized action with such regional organizations as the OSCE and other European structures. Regrettably, the reality remains different.

Having established that "ethnic cleansing" was taking place in Abkhazia, Georgia, the OSCE called for the dispatch of a fact-finding mission to push forward the peace process. However, the United Nations remains reluctant to accept the OSCE findings. While it is struggling with a variety of approaches, the "ethnic cleansing" of the Georgian population in Abkhazia continues. There is therefore a great need to ensure concerted action by the United Nations and regional organizations in the process of conflict management and resolution.

The dilemma of humanitarian intervention could be described as being inherent to the transition from an international to a global — and, hence, more human-centred — world. It has put in a new light the correlation between human rights and security. We are strong proponents of a value-based, universal global order. Therefore, we are confident that the international community should focus on establishing within this Organization strong and efficient preventive mechanisms, mechanisms to prevent gross and systematic violations of human rights, in order to reduce the likelihood of "humanitarian intervention", an extreme measure. We believe that the International Criminal Court will play an indispensable role in this respect as a deterrent and as a preventive mechanism. The dilemma of "humanitarian intervention" is also directly related to United Nations reform, in regard to adapting the existing decision-making mechanism to the timely and effective use of force.

I believe that the primary purpose of the United Nations as a guarantor of international peace cannot be sustained without also securing democracy on the global level. To set the developing world on the path to prosperity, United Nations activities should encompass purposeful financial, economic and political measures aimed at encouraging the democratic development of the newly independent States, which would secure good governance, the rule of law, the protection of human rights and predictable administration. Secure democratic development, not merely security of democracies, is the main challenge to be addressed in the course of shaping the global world.

With regard to our region, in the context of support to the new and restored democracies, we consider the initiative of Azerbaijan, Georgia, Moldova, Ukraine and Uzbekistan to establish an open grouping, known as GUUAM, to be of particular importance. Additional impetus to the manifold cooperation within the grouping was given by the meeting of the heads of the GUUAM States during the Millennium Summit here in New York.

Sometimes in newly established democracies a protracted process towards material welfare calls democratic values into question. One of the most burdensome problems in this respect is debt accommodation. I am confident that it is imperative to release poor and developing countries from this constraint. Writing off the debts will generate a stronger impetus, and create the opportunity for these States to firmly remain on the chosen course of democracy.

We also believe that the all-encompassing process of globalization urgently calls for a dialogue of civilizations as a means of addressing the challenges of

the new millennium, as reaffirmed by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) round table that preceded the Millennium Summit. I confirm Georgia's readiness, expressed by President Eduard Shevardnadze, to play an active role in facilitating such a dialogue.

Much has changed in the 55-year history of the Organization, and today the world community is faced with a new type of challenge requiring novel approaches. In the past decade, there have been repeated calls for Security Council expansion. We support the principle of expanding both permanent and non-permanent membership in the Council by developed as well as developing countries to ensure adequate regional representation. We believe that the seat of a non-permanent member should be allocated for the Group of Eastern European States, the number of which has considerably increased. We are firm supporters of permanent membership for Germany and Japan and hope this issue will find its resolution before long.

Georgia welcomes the increased transparency in the Security Council deliberations. We think that each Member State should be permitted to participate in the informal meetings of the Council, when the issues discussed are of concern to them.

Time and again United Nations actions have been ineffective due to protracted decision-making and lack of consensus in the Security Council. Therefore, the reform of the Security Council should encompass its decision-making procedure, including the veto rights as well.

Finally, I would reiterate that the challenges of the next millennium are myriad and complex. And it is crystal-clear that only united can we address the difficulties of the future and overcome the dividing barriers in shaping a new, global world order. I wish to all of us success in this endeavour.

**The President:** I give the floor to His Excellency Mr. Hugo Tolentino Dipp, Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Dominican Republic.

**Mr. Tolentino Dipp** (Dominican Republic)(*spoke in Spanish*): Representing and speaking on behalf of the Government of the Dominican Republic, which since 16 August 2000 has been presided over by Mr. Hipólito Mejía on the basis of the votes cast by our people for the Dominican Revolutionary Party, we should like to reaffirm our profound commitment to the principles that gave life to this Organization and to the prospect for its further work as we head into a new millennium.

We should like to voice our congratulations to the Secretary-General, Mr. Kofi Annan, for his having convened the historic Millennium Summit on the basis of the report about the role to be played by the United Nations in the twenty-first century, a document which contained an intelligent and pinpointed analysis of the most acute problems of the present and of what is ahead for the international community.

The Dominican Republic is convinced that freedom and equality for all States and for all human beings, without any distinctions whatsoever, constitute the underpinnings for real peace and for harmonious and democratic development of the international community.

The assessment of the world situation drawn up at the Millennium Summit highlighted that notwithstanding the extraordinary scientific and technological strides made, the development in communications media and the rapid expansion of the wealth of some countries, two thirds of mankind live in conditions which prevent freedom and equality from being a common denominator for all the peoples of the earth.

It is all too well known that globalization is not emerging as some magic formula or a panacea to heal wounds, nor as any wondrous invention of the genius of certain sectors of the rich countries.

*Mr. Simão (Mozambique), Vice-President, took the Chair.*

Globalization is the continuation of a process going back centuries in the history of humankind and something which, unfortunately, on the one hand does contribute to the progress and enrichment of some, but on the other hand still leaves us with a developed and an underdeveloped world. It is precisely because of its unequal effects upon the peoples of the world that at the South Summit of the Group of 77 held in Havana, and at the Millennium Summit which took place in this very Hall, we heard with renewed strength a just call for freedom and equality.

The breadth and the dizzying speed of the changes which globalization has triggered in recent years have stirred the good conscience of humanity,

and, although it appears a paradox, a peaceful rebellion, albeit a distrustful one, is beginning to protest what is seen in all this as just one more form of the traditional domination of the powerful over the weakest.

We peoples that had been colonized, and, having gained independence, had to live in permanent defence of our sovereignty and our cultural identity, have developed the kind of sensitivity that allows us to sort out the real consequences of certain historic processes. That explains how, faced with the effects of inescapable globalization, we have reacted critically, determined not to continue to live on the sidelines and not to accept that we should withdraw, unable to achieve the security of a future filled with hope through the exercise of our free will.

Globalization must be guided by the conviction that the aspiration of a world free from upheaval can be achieved only by an equitable interdependence which can understand that the current imbalances caused by the requirements and conditions imposed by certain bodies can be met by the underdeveloped countries only by the gradual application of free trade agreements and the elimination of the kind of protectionism that stands in the way of the free access of goods and services to the markets of the developed countries.

One single example shall suffice to illustrate the consequences of the indiscriminate opening of the market of an underdeveloped country. In the Dominican Republic thousands and thousands of medium and small-sized companies have gone bankrupt because they could not compete with the avalanche of products from the highly industrialized countries.

Peoples whose asymmetry in relation to the developed countries has been affirmed over centuries cannot and will not be able to adapt to being participants benefiting from globalization if they do not receive the kind of support that allows them to attain economic and social objectives that can contribute to overcoming their current underdevelopment. To talk about globalization and to leave the poor countries to their own devices to make all the efforts necessary to come up to the speed of the wealthy countries is a cruel joke. Globalization must be imbued with an effective spirit of solidarity and social justice. Otherwise, underdeveloped humankind may find itself faced with a new version of the economic voracity that is illustrated in the fable of the shark and the sardine.

We believe that these concerns are all too legitimate and, first and foremost, foresighted. We must not in the future be forced to find a new word for globalization to brand it as we branded the imperial policies of the past.

Globalization is already doing more than give rise to concerns and exacerbate the problems of the poor countries; it also steadily worsens the external debt situation. How many times must we pay that debt? When will we finish paying it? We are convinced that certain aspects of globalization and the consequences of external debt are two sides of the same coin. The indifference to the harm that this ruinous debt burden does to the economies of poor countries makes one doubt the existence of a true spirit of solidarity or a sincere readiness to cooperate. Only forgiving that debt under logical and favourable conditions and through mechanisms guaranteeing effectiveness can give underdeveloped countries the encouragement they need to embark on the path into the new era.

Moreover, current price of oil is a further source of distress for those who depend on it for energy production. This year's oil bill for the Dominican Republic will be more than $500 million, which accounts for some 15 per cent of our national budget. This situation — one shared by many other peoples — demands consideration founded on international solidarity and cooperation.

When we in the Dominican Republic speak of solidarity and cooperation, we cannot but speak of Haiti. Because we are adjacent to that fraternal people, we know how much it needs the generous, sustained support of the international community. As the President of the Dominican Republic, Mr. Hipólito Mejía, said at the Millennium Summit, the Dominican Republic cannot alone bear the present social burden of hundreds of thousands of Haitian citizens. The Dominican Republic therefore wants a solution in which the international community would be an active participant, one that must be based on human rights and that must be implemented in accordance with the norms and principles that must govern a sound migration policy.

But let no one think that we have come here to grumble and to use the General Assembly as a wailing wall. That is by no means true. The Government of the

Dominican Republic is absolutely convinced that it is Dominican society itself that must make the greatest effort to achieve development. Mindful of its responsibilities, therefore, the Government of the Dominican Republic accepts the challenge of globalization, because it knows that the first thing is to address the priorities of development, and because it knows also that its greatest efforts must go towards establishing social justice to resolve problems of education, health, the environment, the equality of men and women, children, eliminating poverty, ending drug trafficking, nutrition and steady improvement in human rights and civil liberties.

Fortunately for many of the world's peoples, developed countries and international bodies largely understand that the point of globalization must not be to unleash market forces and to bring about protectionism, production subsidies and technical regulation, because such obstacles can only contribute to widening the gulf between rich and poor. Those countries and organizations are working together sincerely to ensure that the benefits of this process will be shared through cooperation involving the comprehensive development of peoples. It was in that spirit and with those concerns in mind that the United Nations proposed the 2001 High-level Intergovernmental Event on Financing for Development.

The Dominican Republic has strengthened its ties with the Caribbean, with Central America and with other areas of integration, and we are making our contribution to enhance the possibilities for negotiations, access to foreign markets, technology exchanges and cultural enrichment. Moreover, we believe that South-South cooperation is an indispensable complement to growth-oriented programmes undertaken with developing countries.

I turn now to the need to reform the Charter of the Organization. Much has happened since 1945. With undeniable skill, the United Nations bodies of that time dealt with the tasks they faced in the wake of the Second World War. But that was then; now, those bodies do not reflect the realities of a new international community that is larger and more demanding of democratic development.

Reform of the Security Council is imperative; the Dominican Republic considers that it must take place in keeping with the sovereign equality of States, equitable geographical distribution and the varying levels of development of peoples. We are convinced that an increase in the number of both permanent and non-permanent members, carried out on the basis of those principles, would enable the General Assembly to play its role as the organ that is truly representative of international democracy.

I turn now the establishment of the International Criminal Court, which was a major event. We hope that the Court will be able to mete out justice not only to heads of State, heads of Government and officials who commit war crimes, crimes against humanity or crimes against citizens, but also to those who engage in administrative corruption and theft of State property, something that certainly constitutes a crime in many countries because of the economic and moral harm it causes to their peoples.

Because of the desire of the Dominican Republic to be consistent with the historic tradition of its international relations, it wishes to reaffirm its support for the Republic of China in its logical and just aspiration to rejoin the Organization, of which it was a prominent Member for many years. Here, our position reflects a duty born of conscience, not a position that would diminish the rights that the United Nations has recognized others to have.

Also linked to our historic tradition is the principle of national sovereignty. Since it won independence on 27 February 1844, the Dominican Republic has held the right of self-determination as an unshakeable article of faith. Thus, when there is talk of also enshrining humanitarian intervention as a right, we find ourselves faced with a situation that demands clear-cut and precise definitions. We request this body to devote to this issue the attention it deserves so that all its Members will participate in clearing up such a worrisome matter.

*Mr. Simão (Mozambique), Vice-President, took the Chair.*

Finally, the Dominican Republic wishes to express its conviction that the dialogue initiated by the Millennium Summit and the positions expressed in the General Assembly will contribute positively to strengthening efforts for peace and brotherhood, which are the essence of the spirit of the United Nations Charter.

**The Acting President:** I call on Her Excellency Ms. Paulina García de Larrea, Vice-Minister for Foreign Affairs of Ecuador.

**Ms. García de Larrea** (Ecuador) (*spoke in Spanish*): At the outset, I wish to convey to the President my congratulations on his election to lead this session of the General Assembly. He represents a country that shares with mine the ideals and principles that favour peace, culture, human rights, solidarity and understanding.

I hail the entrance of Tuvalu into our Organization, and I congratulate the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Namibia, Mr. Theo-Ben Gurirab, on the skilful and intelligent manner in which the important work of the last session of the General Assembly.

The political events that occurred in the world in the last decade speeded up changes on the international scene, ushering in new global structures and processes. The disappearance of the ideological underpinnings of the cold war produced profound transformations that changed the geopolitical foundations that had prevailed in the twentieth century.

The consolidation of large economic blocs and the technological revolution have had a palpable impact on the pace of economic and social change throughout the world. The free market and the new technologies have favoured competition and have generated the transnational expansion of banking and finance, which has fundamentally changed the way the world economy works.

In this global context, countries are joining the trends of globalization from very different levels of development, and consequently, the opportunities and the effects of these new processes turn out to be extremely unequal. Technological, financial and productive disparities have deepened between the developing countries and the industrialized nations, where most of this potential is concentrated. Notwithstanding the efforts of countries to adapt to and become integrated into a new international environment, inequities have grown and social problems have mushroomed in an environment of deteriorating international cooperation.

The Millennium Summit, which opened this session of the General Assembly, proved to be a historic opportunity to consider in depth the challenges inherent in the new global trends, which are generating a new international order, with its risks and its potential for peace and security, economic growth, sustainable development and human security. It has become clear in the light of these realities that no country can remain on the sidelines or be insulated from the major global changes, and that all States must face the great challenge of working together to regulate the new processes within a universal endeavour to channel the process of development to secure the benefits of globalization, while meeting the needs of the peoples.

Within this context of international responsibility as a priority, the United Nations has a dominant role to play, as a universal forum for States to work together for ideals and objectives common to all peoples and to stimulate international cooperation for sustainable development and poverty eradication.

In the new century, the Organization's potential in world affairs must be fully used. Ecuador trusts in an effective multilateral system whereby global norms for the era of globalization are created in a democratic, participatory and systematic manner. With that objective, the Summit acknowledged the representative nature of the United Nations in the fulfilment of its essential goals, within the framework of the new global processes and the challenges of the twenty-first century.

The interdependence of international political and economic problems becomes significant in this great task, creating a complex mix of matters to be considered on the international agenda of this global institution, the United Nations, which, because of its legitimacy, has the responsibility for adopting coordinated policies and implementing guidelines that ensure the efficiency and timeliness of this Organization's response to events and phenomena occurring in the world that directly affect international security and stability.

I wish to reiterate my congratulations to the Secretary-General on his valuable contribution to the work of this Millennium Assembly through the presentation of his analytical report on the role of the United Nations in the twenty-first century. His thoughts are extremely useful in considering the role and the challenges of the United Nations in the years ahead.

I must also highlight the contribution of the Latin American countries to the work of the Millennium

Assembly through the adoption of the Cartagena Declaration by the heads of State or Government of the Rio Group, and the contribution of the South Summit and the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries, groups of which Ecuador is a member.

Ecuador shares the view regarding the advantages and opportunities relating to the United Nations influencing the management of international public affairs and cultivating the commitment of all actors to approach the new global processes and structures from the perspective of human development.

Globalization and poverty must be tackled with the priority that their profound consequences for human development require. The trends of globalization today appear merely as an economic process, dehumanized and lacking in social dimensions. This process concerns itself with free trade, competition and new information technologies, without an approach that guarantees that it works for people and that opportunities for progress and the benefits of the process will be distributed worldwide, to all countries.

Ecuador is experiencing one of the most acute crises of its history. Its effects have had a grave impact on State institutions and have led to instability in the process of consolidating democracy. Domestic and foreign factors combined in recent years have contributed to aggravating the crisis through macroeconomic imbalances that have severely battered the economy and people of Ecuador. In this context of enormous difficulties, the conditions Ecuador had negotiated for its foreign debt became extremely difficult to meet. Those factors, together with the adjustment measures taken to confront the crisis, have had a considerable impact on poverty.

This global forum must be aware of the enormous difficulties imposed on highly indebted poor countries both by disproportionate external debt servicing and by the continuing obstacles to their export products, as well as by the fluctuations in the international financial system that work against national efforts to create conditions of economic stability and sustainable development. In meeting its goal of bringing about a just and equitable international order, the General Assembly should find means to reduce the external debt of developing countries, including heavily indebted medium-income countries affected by natural disasters.

Ecuador has made great efforts to find a just and lasting solution to the problem of the excessive burden of foreign debt. Last August it took a first step in renegotiating the Brady debt segment, and it concluded its negotiations with the Paris Club last week. We trust that understanding and above all fairness will mark the continuation of this process so that a definitive solution may be found for the problem of external debt, which is crushing developing countries and hindering the implementation of priority social programmes in the areas of health, education and employment. The restraining effect of debt is undoubtedly one of the main obstacles in the fight to reduce poverty and attain the goals set in this area by 2015.

It is necessary to have an economic and institutional order that provides outlets to countries with small economies, which are the most vulnerable and likely to be affected by extreme crises.

Ecuador, committed to overall national development, resolutely supports United Nations activities implementing financial and technical cooperation in support of countries' national efforts to promote sustainable development in order to bring about a better future for all peoples. The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) plays a role in that task as the main operational tool for the efforts of the Organization in support of national plans and priorities to alleviate poverty, contribute to democratic governance and strengthen national capacities for the benefit of human development. I appeal to the international community to ensure that the Millennium Assembly gives resolute political backing to UNDP as the central instrument for the overall management of development in the twenty-first century, and to ensure that the Programme has the financial strength necessary to fully enable it to carry out its operational activities.

The situation of international trade also deserves our priority attention, as it has a direct influence on the economic and social activities of nations. We call for the elimination of trade barriers and obstacles, and demand the application of norms that will make it possible to carry out trade in an open, predictable and equitable way. In accordance with our long-standing tradition of integration, we support the strengthening of the Andean Community and its increased international outreach, in particular with regard to its relations with the Southern Cone Common Market (MERCOSUR), the European Union, Russia and the Pacific Basin and

in the context of negotiations to create a free trade area of the Americas.

Ecuador shares the international community's concern over the continued degradation of natural resources, the threats to the environment and the inadequate compliance with the commitments made at the 1992 Earth Summit on sustainable development. Given its economic, social and environmental implications, we should insist on the need to give priority to sustainable development as a cross-cutting factor in international relations, with regard both to policies and cooperation. There is an imperative need to incorporate appropriate environmental technologies and to develop sustainable production patterns in order to strengthen national scientific and technological capabilities. The Government of Ecuador has incorporated the concept of sustainable development into its national legislation, promoted the adoption of policies and action plans in that context and strengthened its own environmental authority.

The phenomenon of drug trafficking, with its global effects, is another matter for the international community, as it respects neither borders nor nations and poses widespread dangers to society. Drug trafficking has developed a supranational system in which no particular nation can be viewed as the root cause of the problem. It is essential that we recognize the principle of shared responsibility in coping with the reality of this phenomenon, and that we take the necessary international steps to resolve it. Abiding by this universal commitment, which has already been recognized in the 1988 Convention against Illegal Traffic in Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances, is fundamental in our fight against this global problem, one of the challenges confronting humankind.

At the dawn of the twenty-first century, peace, security and disarmament constitute other priority challenges that the United Nations will continue to face. Ecuador advocates the peaceful resolution of international disputes and condemns the threat and use of force in relations between States, as we are convinced that a system of peace and trust among nations must be based on the peaceful resolution of disputes and on specific disarmament measures in the context of the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations and the norms of international law.

In its pursuit of the goals of peace and security, the Security Council bears primary responsibility for the maintenance and restoration of international peace. Ecuador deems it a priority, in terms of the renewal of the United Nations, to reform the Council's composition and methods of work. The Council's mission makes it vital that we correct the current imbalances in the Council's composition, improve its decision-making machinery and lend greater transparency to its methods of work.

Another challenge for the United Nations concerns the role and the strengthening of peacekeeping operations. In recent years humankind has witnessed the exacerbation of regional conflicts and the negative consequences of war in various parts of the globe. It is vital that joint action in the framework of this world Organization be strengthened, so that the use of force, when absolutely necessary, can be applied in strict conformity with Chapter VII of the Charter. In this way the United Nations will be able to retain the international credibility it requires as the legitimate forum for, and agent of, collective action to promote international peace and security.

One of the pillars of democracy in any society is strict respect for human rights, the defence and protection of which are the responsibility not only of each and every State but also of the international community. The international community, therefore, can no longer remain silent or indifferent; it must react, in a legitimate manner, to the massive violations of the rights of entire peoples that were perpetrated in the final years of the past century, which are a source of shame for humankind. Furthermore, it is totally unacceptable for one or more States to seek to represent the international community and to apply, unilaterally and by force, a non-existent "right to interference" on the basis of humanitarian considerations.

In 1998 Ecuador promulgated a national human rights plan with a broad and democratic perspective. The plan, which takes an integrated approach to the human being, was devised and prepared through a nationwide consultative process, with the full involvement of civil society and the public authorities. In this context, the right to development constitutes a legitimate aspiration that must be appropriately and decisively spurred forward by the United Nations.

Ecuador, as a country that is acutely vulnerable to a variety of natural disasters, accords particular importance to the role of the United Nations system in

the prevention, mitigation and reduction of the effects of such disasters, among them the impact of the El Niño phenomenon. In the quest to move forward with research on this phenomenon — which in 1997 and 1998 affected not only the South Pacific region but other areas of the world as well — the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council lent their support to the establishment of an International Centre for the Research of the El Niño Phenomenon, in the city of Guayaquil, in Ecuador. I am pleased to inform the Assembly that my Government, as host country, has taken the steps necessary to proceed with the establishment of that Centre in the next few months, as it is convinced of the scientific contribution that such a United Nations-sponsored instrument can make to humankind.

Ecuador reaffirms its commitment to multilateralism and to the ideals that inspired the founding of the United Nations. The challenges of the twenty-first century must be confronted by all countries jointly and in a spirit of solidarity. The Member States must see to it that this session of the Assembly makes a historic contribution to a universal endeavour to resolve global problems and to strengthen collective security. The achievements of the United Nations in this new century will hinge on a constructive spirit of solidarity on the part of all peace-loving nations.

**The Acting President**: I give the floor to Mr. Rashid Alimov, Chairman of the delegation of Tajikistan.

**Mr. Alimov** (Tajikistan) *(spoke in Russian)*: Let me join in the congratulations addressed to Mr. Harri Holkeri and to his country, Finland, on his election to the lofty and responsible post of President of the fifty-fifth session of the General Assembly. I wish him every success in guiding the work of the Millennium Assembly. I should like to take this opportunity also to express our genuine gratitude and to pay due tribute to Mr. Gurirab for his outstanding diplomatic abilities and for the evident skill with which he guided the work of the fifty-fourth session of the General Assembly.

The further the passage of time separates us from the Millennium Summit, the more profoundly will we appreciate its historic outcome. Tajikistan welcomes the recommitment by world leaders to the role of the United Nations as the key mechanism for the collective regulation of international relations.

We remain convinced that there is no alternative to the United Nations. No one actor is capable of dealing single-handedly with the new multifaceted challenges, risks and threats to international security and stability. Only through concerted and collective action on the part of the entire international community can we combat phenomena such as severe financial and economic crises, regional conflicts, international terrorism, organized crime and the illicit drug trade.

The positive results achieved by my country in the implementation of the peace process in our nation are further proof of the key role of the United Nations in coordinating the efforts of States in the process of resolving armed conflict.

Today, after seven years of confrontation, peace prevails in Tajikistan. Following the first multiparty, pluralistic elections in the country's history, held in February 2000, Tajik society is living in a new kind of environment and is laying down a sound foundation for the sustainable democratic development of the country.

The considerable support of the international community, which, under the auspices of the United Nations, effectively promoted the advancement of the peace process in Tajikistan, played a significant part in the establishment of peace and stability in the country. The Tajik people will always remember the United Nations with gratitude and will always associate this Organization with the return of peace, democracy and conditions for sustainable development to our ancient land.

On behalf of President Emomali Rakhmonov, I take this opportunity to express our great appreciation to the Security Council, the Secretary-General, Mr. Kofi Annan, his special envoys and representatives, and the leaders of the United Nations teams and missions in Tajikistan for their enormous contribution to the successful completion of the peace process in my country. Our special appreciation goes to all those States — about 30 — that sent their citizens to Tajikistan as part of the United Nations Mission of Observers in Tajikistan (UNMOT). The Tajik people will for ever keep in their memories the names of those who gave their lives so that peace could return to our country.

We extend our sincere gratitude to the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), the United Nations Development

Programme (UNDP), the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the International Financial Corporation. They have rendered, and continue to render, every possible support to the people and Government of Tajikistan in their efforts to overcome the effects of the civil conflict and to rehabilitate the country's economy.

At all stages of the peace process the Russian Federation made a decisive contribution to its progressive development. The Russian peacekeepers and frontier guards who lost their lives serving security and stability in Tajikistan and Russia will never be forgotten by our peoples.

The guarantor States for the implementation of the peace agreement — the Russian Federation, the Islamic Republic of Iran, the Republic of Uzbekistan, the Kyrgyz Republic, the Republic of Kazakhstan, Turkmenistan, Pakistan and the Islamic State of Afghanistan — rendered considerable support to the United Nations in achieving the successful settlement of the conflict. The joint efforts of the United Nations, its specialized agencies, the Bretton Woods institutions, neighbouring States, the United States, the European Union, the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) and the Organization of the Islamic Conference (OIC), and of all those others who sincerely desired to see a peaceful and stable Tajikistan, contributed to the successful implementation of the General Agreement on the Establishment of Peace and National Accord in Tajikistan, signed in Moscow on 27 June 1997.

We are fully aware that a huge job of post-conflict peace-building awaits us. We hope that the United Nations office in Dushanbe will continue to operate effectively, rendering rehabilitation assistance, first and foremost, in the social and economic spheres. Much remains to be done, but what has already been accomplished at this stage is of great significance for the steady, peaceful development of Tajik society and for the entire Central and Southern Asia region.

This is undoubtedly of paramount importance for the United Nations, since it constitutes one of the positive examples of successful activities by our Organization in the maintenance of peace and conflict resolution. We hope that the support for and assistance to Tajikistan needed to reinforce the gains of the peace process will be intensified. We count on the General Assembly's adopting during its current session the traditional resolution, normally adopted by consensus, on humanitarian assistance to Tajikistan.

Large-scale humanitarian assistance is of particular importance this year, because in the spring and summer the whole of Tajikistan was affected by a drought on a scale without precedent in the twentieth century. The loss of grain crops on irrigated land proved to be from 30 per cent to 50 per cent. According to the World Food Programme (WFP), about 3 million people — in other words, every second citizen of Tajikistan — is inadequately fed. We greatly appreciate the Secretary-General's appeal for food assistance to the population of Tajikistan most affected by the drought, and we are deeply grateful to the WFP and all donor States that responded so promptly and generously to this appeal.

Clearly, in the new century United Nations activities in the humanitarian sphere, in which it has already demonstrated its capabilities, will continue to play an important role. We believe that it is necessary to intensify the cooperation of Member States in this area in order to increase the international capacity to respond to natural and technological disasters. In our view, this is one of the realistic directions for the development of the Organization, which will allow all to take advantage of the opportunities provided by globalization. This is entirely achievable, once the efforts and capacities of the United Nations and other international economic and financial organizations are united. It would provide a demonstration of the global solidarity called for by the Secretary-General.

Achieving sustainable development and ensuring the equitable consideration of the interests of both present and future generations on a global scale is one of the most serious challenges of the new century. Today we are not far from that boundary beyond which the processes of destruction of the natural mechanisms regulating the environment and global changes become irreversible. Our common objective is to meet the ever increasing needs of human development in the economic and social spheres, while not simply preserving, but gradually restoring natural ecosystems to conditions that will guarantee environmental sustainability.

Much has been accomplished in this area over the last decade. Agenda 21, adopted at the Rio de Janeiro Conference, has become a fundamental document defining the main area of activities of the international

community on this topic. However, the dimensions of the task faced by humanity require extra coordinated efforts. Alongside the long-term problems, such as climate change, the preservation of biodiversity, and desertification, new ones are emerging, demanding careful consideration and concerted action. One is the problem of fresh water, a resource which is being gradually depleted. Depletion of ground waters has become a serious problem. According to some forecasts, by 2050 the population of the planet will not have an adequate water supply. The problem of drinking water is multifaceted and is not confined to purely economic issues.

In "We the peoples: the role of the United Nations in the twenty-first century" the Secretary-General drew attention to the fact that, in order to have a sustainable future, it is absolutely essential that the international community tackle the current fresh water problems. Major concern about this question has been expressed by many non-governmental organizations, as well as by the private sector. It has already been discussed at international conferences, including, at the ministerial level, the Second World Water Forum held in The Hague, the Netherlands last spring, and it will be discussed at the forthcoming International Conference on water problems to be held in Bonn, Germany. All these steps, aimed at giving profound consideration to the matter and elaborating proper coordinated action by the international community, are precisely the purposes served by the initiative put forward by our President a year ago to proclaim 2003 the international year of freshwater. We hope that the relevant resolution will be adopted by consensus at this session. We would be well advised to recall our relationship with the two atoms of hydrogen and one of oxygen that, bound together in nature, support our lives on earth.

While the twenty-first century may present new trials for humanity, that which recently ended challenged the international community with the urgent necessity jointly to combat international terrorism, the drug trade and organized crime. The situation in many regions of the planet demands that the United Nations mobilize even greater international efforts to counteract these horrible phenomena more actively.

The situation in Afghanistan in particular endangers regional and international security. The inter-Afghan crisis has transformed that country into a stronghold of international terrorism and made it the world leader in drug production. The situation in Afghanistan was recently the subject of a thorough discussion at a meeting of the Group of 6+2, held at the level of Foreign Ministers. Tajikistan is firmly convinced that there can be no military solution to the Afghan crisis; any victory by any party to the conflict will be temporary and will not lead to the establishment of peace and stability in that country.

Only the United Nations, in cooperation with the Organization of the Islamic Conference, is capable of untying the tight knot of the Afghan crisis. Tajikistan fully approves of the activities of the United Nations Special Mission to Afghanistan and its Head, Mr. Vendrell. We express our hope that additional resolute measures to be undertaken by the Security Council and the entire international community will eventually allow the fire of war that has raged in that country for 20 years to be extinguished. Otherwise, as we have already seen, the terrorist and narcotic threats to regional and global security emanating from Afghanistan will continue to grow.

Our duty is to help the Afghan people to return to a dignified and peaceful life and to erect a reliable barrier to the heroin-fuelled aggression and the cultivation of international terrorism encouraged by the Taliban, which threaten not only the countries bordering Afghanistan, but also those located far beyond the region. We are convinced that it will become possible to find a formula for peace and a way out of the Afghan deadlock only through our joint efforts and the leadership of the United Nations.

In order to continue playing a key role in world affairs, the United Nations must continuously renew itself. Much has already been done to that end thanks to the important initiatives and effective actions of the Secretary-General. However, a number of issues that could have a real impact on the efficiency of the United Nations in the twenty-first century — inter alia, expanding the Security Council's membership — have yet to be addressed. Tajikistan is in favour of increasing the efficiency, balance and representation of the Security Council by incorporating highly industrialized countries, such as Japan and Germany, and influential developing States into its membership. We hope that this issue will be resolved with the broadest possible support.

Each session of the General Assembly provides us with a unique opportunity to develop a unified approach and to coordinate our actions at the global

level for the sake of a truly democratic, secure and sustainable development of humanity. The Summit of world leaders, unprecedented in the history of mankind, has given our Organization a powerful political impetus with which to enter the twenty-first century. The Millennium Assembly should preserve this momentum and use it rationally for the sake of strengthening the community of nations and our common future.

**The Acting President:** I now give the floor to His Excellency Mr. Ioannis Kasoulides, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Cyprus.

**Mr. Kasoulides** (Cyprus): I would like to extend my warmest congratulations to Mr. Holkeri on his well-deserved election as President of the General Assembly at its fifty-fifth session. I am certain that his considerable experience and diplomatic skills will guide the work of this session to a successful conclusion.

I would also like to take this opportunity to express my appreciation to his predecessor, Mr. Theo-Ben Gurirab, the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Namibia, for the exceptional manner in which he presided over the fifty-fourth session of the General Assembly.

Earlier this month, in this very Hall, an unprecedented gathering of heads of State took place — an event that, through the final Declaration, has given new impetus to enhanced international cooperation to tackle an array of international problems. The Millennium Assembly has expressed the strong will of the peoples of this planet for common action so that humanity can proceed with the construction of a better world.

Cyprus reaffirms its commitment to the United Nations, which we have always considered and continue to consider to be the foundation on which the international community can pursue the lofty goals of peace, security, justice, respect for human rights, and social and economic development on a global level. We thus fully support the continuing efforts towards the reform of the Organization, including its principal organs, so that it will be able to successfully face the many international challenges. For, just as all living organisms are constantly evolving in order to adapt and survive in an ever-changing environment, so does the United Nations need always to have the necessary structures and means that will make it as effective as possible.

Cyprus welcomes the efforts of the United Nations in the area of disarmament and we are particularly pleased at the successful conclusion earlier this year of the review process of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons. We would like to congratulate the Russian Federation for its recent ratification of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty and the START II Treaty. We consider the expansion of the regime of nuclear-free zones, including one in our region of the Mediterranean, to be an important component in our goal towards a nuclear-free world.

The illicit trafficking of small arms is an issue of grave concern. We are fully supportive of international efforts in this direction and consider more effective action to eliminate this phenomenon to be an imperative need of our increasingly interdependent world.

In countless reports of the United Nations and its specialized agencies, the concern is evident regarding the continuing degradation of the environment and the imperative need for global policies in the pursuit of sustainable development. The effects of overpopulation and unregulated development will undoubtedly create new pressures on the environment in this new century. Small island States facing their vulnerability to global warming, rising water level and the increasing scarcity of water resources are particularly concerned in this area. We are particularly pleased with the organization in Cyprus next January of the workshop on energy for sustainable development, a capacity-development initiative of the Alliance of Small Island States. We expect this workshop to make a substantive input to the ninth session of the Commission on Sustainable Development.

The effects of globalization were extensively discussed by world leaders at the Millennium Summit. I will therefore limit myself in this statement to only one aspect of the whole question of the impact of globalization, which we consider a major problem that we all have an obligation to address. The eradication of poverty is undeniably one of the major challenges that the international community faces. It is imperative that new and imaginative policies to attack the problem be developed, with the Member States of the United Nations and the major international financial

institutions working in close cooperation on this issue. Debt relief should be a central part of these efforts.

The progress achieved since the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, which was adopted more than half a century ago, has been considerable. The international regime of human rights instruments has been continually expanding and constitutes the criterion against which the international community and national Governments are judged as to their dedication and actions in the protection of human rights. The United Nations has been at the forefront of these new winds of hope for humankind. The subject of human rights today encompasses a variety of topics. We are very pleased at the successful conclusion of the special session of the General Assembly on women and the follow-up conference on social development, which were held earlier this year in New York and Geneva respectively. We look forward to continuing on this path at the upcoming world conference on racism, xenophobia and related intolerance and at the special session of the General Assembly on children.

One of the areas of particular concern to Cyprus is the increasing number of refugees and internally displaced persons throughout the world. Cyprus has itself experienced the tragic consequences of mass displacement and ethnic cleansing. The vast majority of displaced people — more than 22 million people, according to the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees — are women and children, who are particularly vulnerable to gross violations of their human rights. We strongly believe that the international community has an obligation to more forcefully secure the right of return of these refugees to their places of residence.

Cyprus welcomes the withdrawal of Israeli forces from Lebanon in accordance with resolution 425 (1978)of the Security Council. We would like to consider this as a harbinger of the achievement of a comprehensive solution to the Middle East question. Despite the temporary setback in the Israeli-Palestinian final-status negotiations, we believe that the process can and should move forward, so that peace, stability and prosperity will finally be established in this long-tormented region. Cyprus supports the implementation of the relevant resolutions of the Security Council in this respect.

Cyprus fully supports Security Council resolution 1244 (1999) and calls for the full respect of the human rights of all the inhabitants of Kosovo, irrespective of their origin, as well as for the full respect for the sovereignty, the territorial integrity and the democratic process of all States in the region. We also commend the European Union for its considerable initiatives and support for the economic and political stabilization of South-Eastern Europe.

We have been encouraged by the positive climate that has existed since the June meeting between the North and South Korean leaders. We express our support for further measures to achieve reconciliation, stability and cooperation in the Korean peninsula. We have been heartened by the prospect of reunification and of the termination of the division in this sensitive region.

Cyprus fully supports the process for the establishment of an international criminal court and was one of the original signatories of the Rome Statute. We look forward to further progress in the work of the Preparatory Commission for the International Criminal Court and welcome the results of its last session regarding the consensus reached on the rules of procedure and evidence and the elements of crime. Our support stems from our firm belief that if we are to live in a world where justice and international law prevail, then impunity for abhorrent crimes against humanity should end immediately. Cyprus, itself a victim of such crimes, knows very well the bitter truth of impunity.

For the last 26 years the General Assembly has included in its agenda the question of Cyprus. Decisions by this Assembly, in particular resolution 3212 (XXIX), as well as successive Security Council resolutions, call for the restoration of the territorial integrity, unity and independence of the Republic of Cyprus and the withdrawal of the Turkish troops and settlers from an independent country, Member of the United Nations, which was invaded in 1974 and whose territory, 37 per cent of it, is controlled by the Turkish occupation army.

An attempt has been made from this rostrum to give a different version from and interpretation of the one upheld and understood by this General Assembly and by the Security Council. When one talks about the events of 1963, one should not forget the armed insurgency against the legal Government of the Republic and the deliberate decision of the Turkish Cypriot leadership to withdraw its representatives from Parliament and the organs of the Government, in order

to pave the way for the present de facto division of the island.

Furthermore, it is well known and confirmed by the three reports of the European Commission of Human Rights, following appeals by the Republic of Cyprus against Turkey, that ethnic cleansing occurred in Cyprus in 1974 with the violent uprooting of one-third of the Cypriot population from their homes and their expulsion from the areas that are now under Turkish occupation. This is a classic example of a creation of faits accomplis through the use of force.

Enough has already been said about history, and many recriminations were levelled by one side against the other. We have said time and again to our Turkish Cypriot compatriots, and we repeat to the Government of Turkey, that it is high time we looked to the future. A future bright and prosperous for all Cypriots, permeated by a spirit of reconciliation, in a peaceful, demilitarized and reunited Cyprus, member of the European Union, in which all Cypriots would live in conditions of peace, prosperity and the full protection of their human rights and fundamental freedoms.

We want a future without occupation armies, without barbed wires of division and without human suffering. Indeed, how can one seriously claim that the massive Turkish military force which invaded and has continued to occupy 37 per cent of Cypriot territory for the last 26 years is a force of pacification and liberation? Had these forces been pacification or liberation troops, as Turkey tries to portray them, would the Security Council, which represents the collective wisdom of the international community, call repeatedly for their withdrawal? Moreover, how can anyone, speaking before this body, describe United Nations resolutions and their call to uphold and adhere to international law as romantic descriptions and unrealistic assessments?

One further point that I would like to make is the reference to the so-called realities in Cyprus. We have been asked to accept, if we want to find a solution, these so-called realities on the ground. These realities are, of course, the result of the Turkish invasion and its dire consequences on the people of Cyprus. One such stark reality reflecting the ultimate aims of Turkey in Cyprus is the importation of 98,000 Turkish mainland settlers into the occupied areas in an effort to change the demographic structure of the island. Another reality is the mass emigration of our fellow Turkish Cypriots from the occupied areas and the constant threat posed by the 36,000 Turkish occupation troops stationed on the island. This threat is real and manifests itself from time to time through provocative actions on the ground. Such is the case of the Turkish advance in Strovilia, following the adoption last June of a resolution by the Security Council renewing the mandate of the United Nations Peacekeeping Force in Cyprus (UNFICYP). This illegal action has been described by the United Nations Secretary-General as a clear violation of the status quo. The inability of the Organization to return the situation to the status quo ante tarnishes its image and credibility. Could one imagine the consequences for international relations, when nations are forced to accept solutions based on faits accomplis created and sustained through the use of military force and unilateral acts? Can we allow such a precedent to pave the way for the disintegration of so many countries around the globe? What, indeed, would be the consequences for small States in this kind of so-called international order, where international law is selectively applied and the will of the mighty reigns supreme?

The one and only reality is the imperative need for peace and reconciliation in Cyprus through a mutually acceptable solution within the parameters of United Nations resolutions. We are currently engaged in the fourth round of proximity talks. We have come to these talks with flexibility and with the political will to reach a solution as prescribed by this Organization. We appeal to the Turkish side to seize the moment and capitalize on the current favourable environment in order to reach a comprehensive settlement. Such a settlement will be based on Security Council resolutions, which call for a bi-zonal, bi-communal Federal Republic of Cyprus, with a single sovereignty, citizenship and international personality, comprising two politically equal communities, as described in Security Council resolution 750 (1992). The Turkish side must realize that a solution must be mutually acceptable and based on international law, and it must not insist on imposing its will and on a solution based on faits accomplis.

Our common aim should be a solution that would be honourable and something to be cherished by future generations of all Cypriots, Greek and Turkish alike, to whom our utmost purpose is to bequeath a better place to live in harmony, tolerance and cooperation.

**The Acting President:** I now call on the Chairman of the delegation of the Federated States of Micronesia, His Excellency Mr. Masao Nakayama.

**Mr. Nakayama** (Micronesia): I would like to take this opportunity to congratulate the President on his assumption of the presidency of the fifty-fifth session of the General Assembly.

I have the honour to speak on behalf of the members of the Pacific Island Forum group of countries at the United Nations, comprising Australia, Fiji, Kiribati, Marshall Islands, Nauru, New Zealand, Palau, Papua New Guinea, Samoa, the Solomon Islands, Tonga, Tuvalu, Vanuatu and my own country, Micronesia.

It is with pride that I congratulate and extend a warm welcome to our Pacific Island neighbour Tuvalu into the United Nations family. The members of our group may vary greatly in land and ocean areas, population, resource endowment, economic development, social structures, languages and cultures, but we share a common goal for the Pacific, based on security and stability, as well as prosperity and economic opportunities for its peoples, and the sustainability of resources. Within the same context the Pacific Islands Forum countries represented in New York reaffirm their commitment to play a supportive role in the United Nations decolonization programmes in respect of the remaining non-self-governing territories in the Pacific.

The Pacific Ocean occupies a central place in the lives of the people of the Pacific Islands. Preservation of this resource — which contains the world's highest marine diversity — is critical to our future economic development. The vast oceanic area under the control of our members is rich in fishing potential but requires careful management and monitoring to address illegal, unregulated and unreported fishing and other environmental threats. A major achievement for us and our distant-water fishing partners is the convention recently adopted by the Multilateral High-Level Conference on the Conservation and Management of Highly Migratory Fish Stocks in the Western and Central Pacific, which will protect the world's last great tuna fishery.

The first meeting of the United Nations Open-ended Informal Consultative Process on Oceans and Law of the Sea, under the co-chairmanship of the Ambassador of Samoa, promises to serve as a vital part of the preparatory process for the General Assembly's consideration of ocean issues. The ocean priorities identified by the Pacific Island Forum include ratification of the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea and the United Nations agreement on fish stocks; marine scientific research and technical assistance; and the delimitation of maritime zones, including continental shelves.

The world's security environment has become more fluid and uncertain with new and emerging threats. Events this year show that a reputation for stability and peace are by no means guaranteed in the Pacific. In light of the political crisis in Fiji and the social unrest in the Solomon Islands, Foreign Ministers of the Forum met in Samoa in August. They recognized the need for regional action to be taken on the basis of all members being part of the Pacific Islands extended family. In doing so the Forum must demonstrate that it is prepared constructively to address difficult and sensitive issues, including the underlying causes of tensions and conflicts, such as ethnicity, socio-economic disparities, lack of good governance, land disputes and erosion of cultural values. Accordingly, they decided to recommend to the Pacific Island Forum meeting in Tarawa, Kiribati, that leaders commit themselves and their countries to a number of fundamental principles and courses of actions, including the following: belief in liberty of the individual under the law, equal rights for all citizens regardless of gender, race, colour, creed, political belief and in the individual's inalienable right to participate by means of a free and democratic political process in framing the society in which he or she lives; upholding democratic processes and institutions which reflect national and local circumstances, including the peaceful transfer of power, the rule of law and the independence of the judiciary, just and honest government and recognizing the importance and urgency of equitable economic, social and cultural development to satisfy the basic needs and aspirations of the people of the Forum.

The ministers established a working group to develop these principles, and options for action in cases where the principles have been violated, for consideration by Forum leaders when they meet in Kiribati.

In addition to increasing incidents of civil unrest, the region is facing new threats from international, financial and cyber crime and people-smuggling, as

well as the challenge of preventing and controlling communicable diseases and the HIV/AIDS pandemic. The threat associated with uncontrolled access to even a small number of weapons was brought into stark relief in the region recently, adding weight to the Forum leaders' decision in 1997 to put in place regional cooperation and a legal framework to control the spread of weapons in the region. This approach is in step with international efforts to combat the illicit trade in small arms, particularly in the lead-up to the 2001 United Nations Conference on the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects. Work on a legal framework has progressed to a point where we expect draft legislation to be circulated among Forum island countries before the end of this year.

We in the Pacific retain a close relationship, in both economic and cultural terms, with our natural environment. We therefore maintain a keen interest in the development of the Environmental Vulnerability Index. We thank the several Governments that have kindly committed substantial funds for the completion of the third phase of the studies being conducted by the South Pacific Applied Geoscience Commission (SOPAC), and encourage its adoption by the United Nations so that the environmental and natural risks that our members face are recognized when consideration is given to eligibility for concessional aid, trade treatment and least-developed-country status.

Agenda 21 and the Barbados Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States remain the basic guideline for protecting the environment and achieving sustainable development. Steady progress is required in the preparations for the 10-year review of the United Nations Conference on the Environment and Development, to take place in 2002. We give high priority to international efforts to have the Kyoto Protocol come into force at the earliest possible date. We are thus committed to achieving a successful outcome to the sixth session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, to be held in November. We welcome the formulation of specific tools, such as the Clean Development Mechanism, which promise to be useful in enabling island countries to do our part to combat climate change and to adapt to its consequences within the parameters of our own national circumstances.

Strengthened efforts are being made in the region to build capacity to understand and respond to climate change, including through observational networks. The small island nations of the Pacific face unique constraints on development. Most have small subsistence-based economies with a narrow export base. Forum economic ministers meeting in July reconfirmed their commitment to the process of economic reform, based on the principle of good governance, with the aim of providing a sound economic basis upon which social development can take place.

The World Trade Organization (WTO) remains the world's most significant international opportunity for the negotiation of trade and commercial issues. The Pacific Island Forum has agreed to establish a Forum delegation in Geneva and a working group of Forum trade officials to improve cooperation in the WTO and to actively engage in the policy debate about the best way to enhance the role of the WTO in contributing to development. We recognize the importance of finding ways to ensure that trade reform delivers outcomes which will contribute not only to economic growth, but also to the advancement of development and social equity objectives and improved environmental outcomes.

The global information economy promises great opportunities, particularly for those in isolated areas such as the Pacific, but it also demands new skills and technology. Efficient and effective communications services, including a dedicated modern network system like the Small Island Developing States Network (SIDSNET), are of critical importance in achieving economic and social development and overcoming the constraints resulting from the relatively high cost structures of telecommunication networks for Forum island countries. A Forum vision for the Pacific information economy seeks to develop an appropriate mechanism for the cooperation of regional regulators and relevant organizations. Education and training are of fundamental importance to enhancing the adaptability of Pacific islanders to economic reform in a rapidly changing world and region. By supporting education, the United Nations can help overcome one of the major obstacles to economic growth and poverty reduction.

The United Nations system continues to play a vital role in protecting the interests of small island States, such as most of the members of the Pacific

Island Forum. It is essential that the United Nations remain strong by adapting to meet new challenges such as globalization. At the same time, the central role of the General Assembly, with its universal membership, should be strengthened. The Security Council should be made more representative, transparent and democratic so as to be able to respond to the requirements of a fundamentally different international setting. It needs to be reformed comprehensively to meet contemporary demands and the conditions of the world today.

We welcome the Brahimi report (A/55/305) and look forward to the strengthening of the ability of the United Nations to carry out its key peacekeeping role. To fulfil its collective security responsibilities, the United Nations must be afforded strong and sustained political support, together with financial and institutional resources. An integral element is a more equitable scale for determining peacekeeping funding.

The Pacific Island Forum group remains committed to ensuring an effective United Nations.

**Programme of work**

**The President:** I should like to draw the attention of the General Assembly to document A/INF/55/3, which contains a partial programme of work and schedule of plenary meetings and which has been distributed in the Hall. This schedule was prepared to facilitate the organization of the work of delegations and to help ensure that the relevant documentation is ready for the discussion of the respective items.

I will, in due course, announce the dates for the consideration of other agenda items, as well as keep the Assembly informed of any additions or changes. This information will also be indicated in addendums to document A/INF/55/3.

I should like to remind members that the list of speakers for agenda item 10, "Report of the Secretary-General on the work of the Organization", is already open. The lists of speakers for other items cited in document A/INF/55/3 are open.

In addition, I should like to announce the following activities. The 2000 United Nations/Food and Agricultural Organization of the United Nations Pledging Conference for the World Food Programme will take place in the afternoon of Wednesday, 1 November. The 2000 United Nations Pledging Conference for Development Activities will be held in the mornings of Wednesday and Thursday, 1 and 2 November.

The announcement of voluntary contributions to the 2001 programme of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees will take place on Friday, 10 November, in the morning. The announcement of voluntary contributions to the 2001 programmes of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East will take place on Monday, 4 December, in the morning. Members are requested to consult the Journal for the announcements on these activities for further details.

*The meeting rose at 1 p.m.*